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Making sense of the world



THE WEEK

Junior

THE BEST
MAGAZINE FOR
CURIOUS
KIDS

EARLY BIRD

The discovery of a fossil in China changes the timeline of bird evolution **p14**





This week's big news

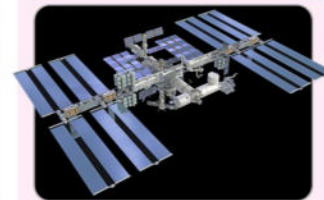


GETTING AROUND

Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore orbited the Earth 4,576 times during their nine months in space.

The capsule carrying the astronauts splashes down.

Aboard the ISS



Since the first crew went to the International Space Station (above) in 2000, a total of 23 countries have sent more than 280 people to the orbiting science lab. The list includes 168 people from the US, 62 from Russia, 11 from Japan, nine from Canada, and six from Italy. Thirteen private citizens have also visited.

Astronauts settle into life on Earth

Two NASA astronauts have traveled back to Earth after spending 286 days at the International Space Station (ISS, a laboratory orbiting 254 miles from Earth). Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore were originally meant to spend eight days at the ISS for a test flight but ended up staying longer due to mechanical issues. The pair returned to Earth on a SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule on March 18.

Why were they delayed?

Williams, age 59, and Wilmore, age 62, traveled to the ISS in June 2024 to test the Starliner spacecraft, which was built for NASA by the aerospace company Boeing. During the flight, Starliner leaked helium gas and had problems with its thrusters, which are used to reenter Earth's atmosphere. NASA engineers were uncertain whether the craft could safely return the astronauts to Earth, so it was sent back without passengers. Wilmore and Williams remained aboard the ISS, and NASA announced in August that they would continue working there as part of the Crew-9 mission until March, when the Crew-10 mission was scheduled to fly to the station and take over its onboard operations.

What did they do on the ISS?

The nine-month stay involved a variety of jobs, including operations and maintenance of the ISS and nearly 1,000 hours of scientific research. For an experiment to see whether microorganisms (tiny living things) from Earth could survive in space, both astronauts took a spacewalk to swab the exterior of the ISS for samples that could be brought back to Earth for study. Each astronaut had been to the ISS twice before, and the spacewalks they conducted during this mission enabled Williams to set a new record. With nine spacewalks totaling

62 hours, she has now spent more time spacewalking than any other female astronaut. Along with US astronaut Nick Hague and Russian cosmonaut Aleksandr Gorbunov, who flew to the station in September, Williams and Wilmore communicated with family and friends via video calls and emails and exercised with modified gym equipment, such as a treadmill rigged with a harness, to keep them from floating away.

How did they return?

A SpaceX spacecraft arrived at the ISS on March 16 carrying the Crew-10 team, which included NASA astronauts Anne McClain and Nichole

Ayers, Japanese astronaut Takuya Onishi, and Russian cosmonaut Kirill Peskov. Williams, Wilmore, Hague, and Gorbunov then boarded the Dragon capsule for the five-hour journey to Earth. The spacecraft traveled more than 17,000 mph before it slowed and four large parachutes opened to help it land. The capsule splashed down off the coast of Florida, where a pod of dolphins circled it before it was hoisted onto a ship and the smiling astronauts emerged from the capsule one by one.

How are they adjusting?

After landing, the astronauts were flown to Houston, Texas, for medical evaluation. Astronauts returning from space can feel unsteady on their feet at first because their inner ears have to readjust to the pressure of gravity. Weightlessness can also affect vision and blood pressure and weaken bones and muscles, especially those in the legs, hips, and spine. The soles of their feet lose the toughness built up by walking, resulting in a condition called "baby feet." During a 45-day post-mission recovery program, Williams and Wilmore are spending two hours a day with trainers to regain the fitness levels they had before leaving for the ISS. They have also reunited with their families, NASA said, and are enjoying some time off from work.



The Dragon spacecraft

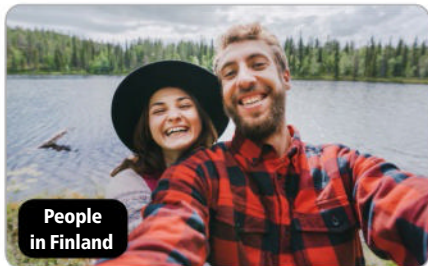


World's happiest countries named

The World Happiness Report was published on March 20, with Finland named the happiest country in the world for the eighth year in a row. The report has been compiled by an international team of scientists every year since 2012.

Researchers asked people from more than 140 countries to rank their satisfaction with their lives on a scale of 1 to 10. Contributing factors included the economy, government, personal freedom, and social connections. People in the happiest countries were found to have high levels of social supports like accessible healthcare and education, and a strong belief in the kindness of others, such as expecting that someone will return a lost wallet.

Denmark and Iceland were the second and third happiest nations. The US was 24th, its lowest ranking since the report began. Jon Clifton from Gallup, which helped run the study, said, "Happiness isn't just about wealth or growth—it's about trust, connection, and knowing people have your back."



People in Finland



In the US, 670 species of birds were counted.

DID YOU KNOW?
A scientist who studies birds is called an ornithologist. That word comes from the Greek *ornis*, meaning "bird."

Global bird count results released

Results are in from the 2025 Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), a project that encourages people around the world to get involved in scientific research by identifying bird species in their area. About 838,113 people participated this year, recording observations of 8,078 species.

The GBBC, organized by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the National Audubon Society, and Birds Canada, took place from February 14–17. During those four days, people were asked to spend at least 15 minutes looking for birds and send in a checklist of all the birds they saw or heard. Participants could submit their lists through the eBird app or website or the Merlin Bird ID app, which helps identify species.

This year, the US had the most submissions of any country, with more than 200,000 checklists

identifying 670 bird species. The northern cardinal, dark-eyed junco, and house finch were some of the most commonly reported birds in the US. India submitted the second-most checklists, and Canada sent in the third-most submissions. Colombia residents set a record for the largest variety of species reported in a country, with 1,374, including a rare sighting of the flame-crested tanager.

Other rare birds spotted this year included the Lewin's rail in Australia and the black-and-white shrike-flycatcher in Kenya. The tufted duck, which usually lives in Africa, Europe, and Asia, made surprise appearances in the US and Canada. The largest flock recorded during this year's count was a group of 500,000 European starlings that were seen flying together in England. The next GBBC will be held from February 13–16, 2026.



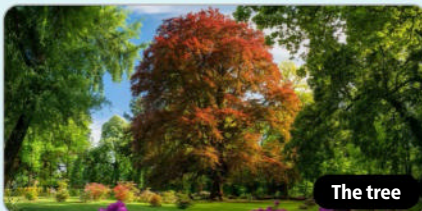
IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

A FUN DISCOVERY

A baby beaver named Cypress has captured hearts on social media after discovering her own feet. In a video with more than 1.6 million views, Cypress squeals and plays with one webbed foot while rescuer Deborah Edwards says, "That's just as cute as it can be."



Cypress



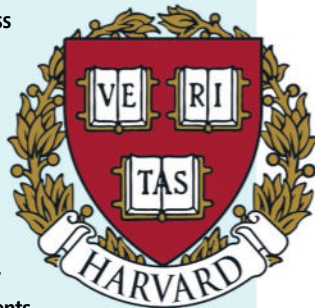
The tree

CELEBRATING NATURE

For the fourth time, a 300-year-old beech tree has won the European Tree of the Year Award. The tree, known as the Heart of the Dalkowskie Hills, displays its red leaves in a historic park in Dalków, Poland, where visitors toss peanuts into it and make a wish.

A TUITION BREAK

On March 17, Harvard University announced that students whose families make \$200,000 per year or less will receive free tuition starting in the 2025–2026 academic year. Food and housing will also be covered for those who make less than \$100,000. The Massachusetts college, which is one of the world's top universities, said the goal is to make education more affordable for lower-income students.





National news

DID YOU KNOW?

There are 94 federal judicial districts in the US, with at least one district court in each state.



The E. Barrett Prettyman United States Courthouse in Washington, DC, where the legal dispute began

Who is James Boasberg?



Judge James Boasberg (above) grew up in Washington, DC, and attended Yale University. He earned a law degree in 1990 and worked as a lawyer and federal prosecutor. In 2002, he became a judge. He was appointed a federal judge in 2011 and became chief judge of the District of Columbia's federal court in 2023.

Challenge unfolds in US federal court

The nation's court system is facing a challenge to its authority from President Donald Trump's administration. Experts say the controversy is significant because it challenges the Constitution's principle of three equal branches of government. The branches—executive (the President), legislative (Congress, which makes laws), and judiciary (the courts)—are meant to have the same power and to respect the other branches.

How did the disagreement begin?

On March 15, the administration ordered two planeloads of people mostly from Venezuela to be deported (forced out of the country for legal reasons) from the US and sent to a prison in El Salvador. The same day, two organizations filed lawsuits (legal disputes) at the federal

(national) level seeking to block the deportation of five Venezuelans who were believed to be wrongly included in the planeloads of people.

What happened after that?

Judge James Boasberg (see box above) issued a temporary order blocking the five people from being deported. The same day, Trump ordered the planes to depart, saying a law from 1798 gave him the authority, and they took off. Boasberg then ordered the planes in the air to return to the US. The planes kept going and landed in El Salvador. On March 17, Boasberg ordered the Trump administration to appear in court over the "possible defiance" of his order. The next day, Trump said on social media that Boasberg should be impeached (removed from office).

What did the Supreme Court say?

Chief Justice John Roberts issued a rare public statement rejecting Trump's call for impeachment. "For more than two centuries, it has been established that impeachment is not an appropriate response to disagreement concerning a judicial decision," Roberts said. Impeachment of a judge is usually taken only in cases of serious ethical or criminal misconduct.

What will happen next?

When *The Week Junior* went to press on March 25, the Trump administration told Boasberg it would not disclose any further information about the flights for security reasons. The move escalated a growing conflict between the administration and the judiciary, legal experts said.



WORD OF THE WEEK

BIRD

In Old English, feathered friends were called *brids*, not "birds." Over time, the "r" and "i" swapped places in a process known as metathesis, which helps speakers pronounce a word more easily. Other words that have had a similar sound swap include "wasp," which was initially "waps."



THE WEEK IN HISTORY

April 1, 1979

Nickelodeon TV network launched

On April 1, 1979, Nickelodeon, the first cable TV channel focused on children's content, was launched. It was named after early US movie theaters that were known as nickelodeons because they charged a nickel for admission. In 1999, it launched the animated series *SpongeBob SquarePants*, which became a global hit. Today, Nickelodeon is considered the top entertainment brand for children.





Wind turbines

Milestone for renewable energy

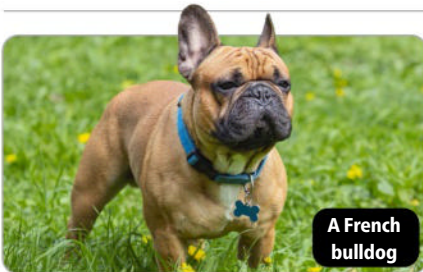
For the first time in US history, wind and solar energy generated more electricity than coal did in 2024. Wind and solar, which are renewable energy sources that aren't harmful to the environment, provided about 17% of the nation's power needs. Coal, a fossil fuel that's been found to contribute to climate change, accounted for 15% of power. Natural gas remained the largest source of electricity in the US.



Coco

Sequel to hit film is announced

Disney and Pixar announced that *Coco 2*, a sequel to the award-winning movie *Coco*, will be released in 2029. The original film, which came out in 2017 and grossed more than \$800 million worldwide, follows a boy whose dreams of becoming a famous musician lead him into the Land of the Dead. *Coco* director Lee Unkrich will return as co-director. Plot details for the new film weren't revealed.



A French bulldog

Favorite dog breed in the US

The French bulldog is the nation's most popular dog breed for the third year in a row, according to the American Kennel Club, which maintains the world's largest registry of dog breeds. About 74,500 French bulldogs were registered in the US in 2024. Labradors were the second-most popular purebred owned by Americans, followed by golden retrievers, German shepherds, and poodles.



McKenna Whitham

FIRST KICKOFF
The National Women's Soccer League held its first season in 2013 with eight clubs participating.

Teen soccer star makes history

At age 14, McKenna "Mak" Whitham has become the youngest player to appear in a National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) match. She came on as a substitute for NJ/NY Gotham FC in the remaining minutes of the club's 1-1 tie with Seattle Reign on March 15, which was opening matchday for the 2025 NWSL season. The previous record was set by Olivia Moultrie, who debuted for the Portland Thorns at age 15 in 2021.

Whitham is from Granite Bay, California, and she began playing soccer at an early age with support from her parents. Her father, who was the youngest member of a US Olympic ski team at age 15, has guided her training, while her mother homeschools her to allow more flexibility for soccer. Whitham has played for the Slammers FC and the semi-pro team Santa Clarita Blue Heat, and she is a member of the Under-15 youth national team.

Gotham FC signed Whitham to a four-year contract last year when she was 13. The

contract became effective in January 2025, making Whitham the youngest player on a NWSL team roster. She is also the youngest athlete in any sport to sign a name, image, and likeness contract with Nike.

Because Whitham is under 18, she follows special regulations set by the league, which are meant to protect her while she plays professionally. She has regular pediatric medical evaluations and safety assessments, for example, and she also has her own locker room. It's adjacent to the main locker room that her teammates use, allowing her to join in on team spirit and camaraderie.

As the season progresses, Whitham will continue training with the team and hopes to earn more playing time. She said she was proud of her historic debut, which she called "a dream come true." "Standing on the sideline and waiting to get on the pitch was pretty exciting," she said. "I wanted to be out there and was ready."



The logo for the NWSL's NJ/NY Gotham FC

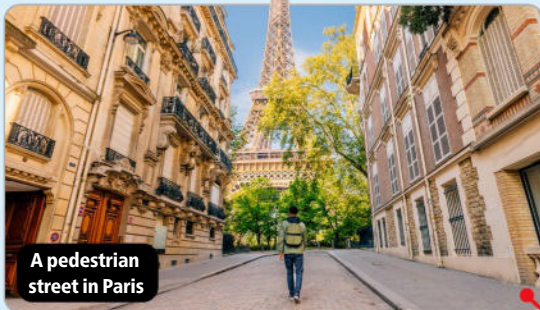
THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Dancing horse rescued from busy California road" *UPI*





Around the world



A pedestrian street in Paris



Paris, France

More streets to be car-free

Voters in Paris have approved a new law to ban cars from 500 city streets and remove more than 10,000 parking spots. Street space will be replaced with plants and trees to improve air quality and keep the city cool as the planet warms. City officials said they will work with residents to determine which streets will be transformed. Paris has turned hundreds of streets into green spaces in recent years.



Soldiers outside the palace



Khartoum, Sudan

Army takes back presidential palace

On March 21, the Sudanese army reclaimed control of the Republican Palace, the official residence of Sudan's president. The army has been fighting a group called the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since April 2023, when the RSF took control of parts of the capital. The recapture of the palace is considered a major victory for the Sudanese army. The RSF still controls large areas of Sudan, however, and fighting is expected to continue.



Maiduguri today



Maiduguri, Nigeria

Local community helps flood victims

After severe flooding in September 2024, the city of Maiduguri has recovered thanks to local people helping one another. The government did not provide support immediately after the floods, so residents stepped in. Store owners offered shelter to people who had lost their homes, young people donated clothes, and others raised money and delivered meals to those in need.



Vatican City

Pope leaves hospital

After spending five weeks in a hospital in Rome, Italy, with pneumonia, Pope Francis, age 88, was discharged on March 23. Before leaving, the Pope, who is the head of the worldwide Catholic church, made a brief appearance from a hospital balcony to give a blessing to the crowd below. He will now spend two months recovering at home.



Pope Francis



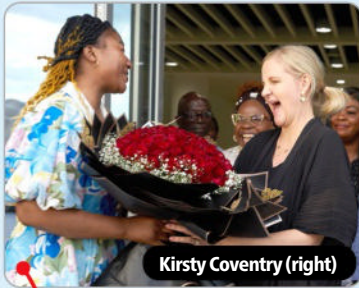
South Africa

Penguins protected

A 12-mile no-fishing zone has been established off the coast of South Africa to protect African penguins, which are endangered. Commercial fishing companies in this area use large nets to catch anchovies and sardines, and conservationists say this is contributing to the declining population of penguins. For the next 10 years, companies will no longer be able to fish in six vital African penguin breeding areas.



African penguins



Kirsty Coventry (right)



Athens, Greece New Olympics leader chosen

Kirsty Coventry, the current sports minister of Zimbabwe, was elected the 10th president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on March 20. Coventry, a former competitive swimmer and two-time Olympic gold medalist, is the first female president of the IOC and the first African to take on the role. Her eight-year term will start on June 23.



A demonstration



Istanbul, Turkey Thousands protest mayor's arrest

The largest street protests in more than a decade have erupted across Turkey, as tens of thousands of people opposed the arrest of Ekrem Imamoglu, Istanbul's mayor. Imamoglu, who is a rival of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was formally arrested March 23 on corruption charges. Critics say the arrest is politically motivated. As *The Week Junior* went to press, the government had detained more than 1,100 people, including journalists.

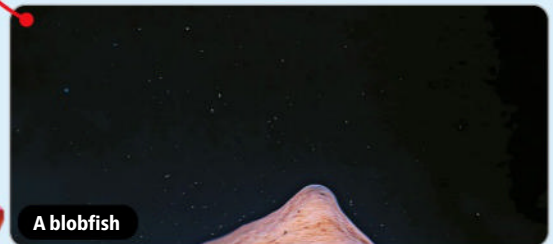


Speaking out in Jakarta



Jakarta, Indonesia Military law sparks outrage

On March 20, Indonesia's parliament (similar to Congress) passed a change to the law that critics fear broadens the military's role beyond defense. Military officers will now be able to take government jobs that were previously off limits to them unless they resigned or retired from the armed forces. The revised law has sparked criticism and demonstrations by student activists who say the military should not be involved in politics.



A blobfish



Whangārei, New Zealand Blobfish wins annual competition

The blobfish has been named New Zealand's fish of the year. The creature, known as Mr. Blobby, is famous for its distinctive appearance. It won the competition after receiving nearly 300 more votes than its closest rival, the orange roughy. Kim Jones, from the Mountains to Sea Conservation Trust, which runs the contest, said it was a "battle of two quirky deep-sea critters."



Mexico City, Mexico Ban on bullfighting

Lawmakers in Mexico City have voted to ban violent bullfighting, an event where a person (called a matador) fights and typically kills a bull. Under the new law, bulls can't be killed or wounded during the fight, and matadors won't be allowed to use sharp weapons. Some people argued against a complete ban because bullfighting supports thousands of local jobs. Animal rights activists celebrated the decision but will still push for a complete bullfighting ban.



A matador and a bull



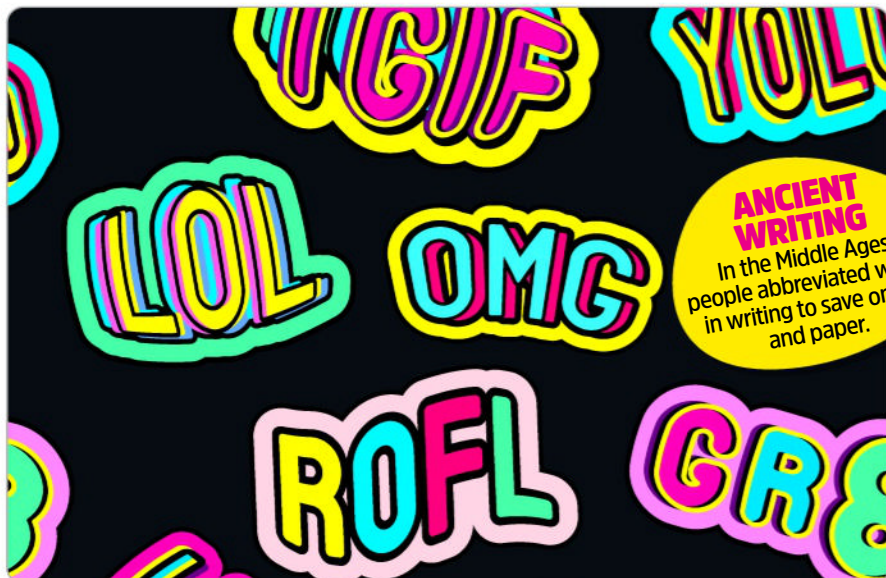
The big debate

Should we use abbreviations?

Some people say skipping letters makes speech and messages hard to understand.

What you need to know

- Abbreviations are shortened forms of words or phrases. An example would be using “gr8” instead of “great.” They can be used to save time when writing or speaking.
- Some abbreviations are acronyms, which consist of the first letters of a series of words—like ASAP instead of “as soon as possible” or BRB for “be right back.”
- Texting on phones and posting on social media have led to a major uptick in the use of abbreviations.



We encounter abbreviations every day, in all kinds of places. Here in the US—which of course is an abbreviation for the United States—we call our space agency NASA, rather than the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, because it’s easier. And what was once known as the Scholastic Aptitude Test is now just the SAT, which is a college admissions exam (that’s short for examination!). Many abbreviations are so common that we say them without thinking. Some people feel they make talking, reading, and writing easier, but others find shortened words or phrases confusing. What do you think? Should we use abbreviations?

Yes—they simplify life

Language is constantly changing and has been ever since humans began to speak. If it didn’t evolve, we would still be saying “thine” instead of “yours” and “thou” instead of “you.” Imagine that! Some abbreviations, like “GIF” or “FBI,” are so common and well-known that it would sound odd to say them in full. Abbreviations can be used to make text and speech shorter, quicker, and easier to understand. That’s useful if you’re in a hurry—for example, typing “BRB” is much faster than writing “I’ll be right back.” Abbreviations are also a kind of common language that can help people feel comfortable and familiar with each other.

No—they’re confusing

If abbreviations aren’t used correctly, they can slow you down rather than speed things up. For example, if a word or phrase isn’t written out in full the first time it’s used in a piece of writing, the reader may have to waste time researching what it means. Abbreviations can also lead to misunderstandings or make people feel left out or embarrassed. If you don’t know what something means, it’s awkward to ask another person to explain it. And sure, language evolves over time, but some changes aren’t for the better. Saying “ty” just isn’t as polite as saying “thank you,” is it? It just sounds lazy and, frankly, insincere.

YES

Three reasons we should use abbreviations

- 1 Language is always evolving, which is a common and natural process.
- 2 It would be weird to use the long version of a word or phrase when an abbreviation is faster and more effective.
- 3 Abbreviations are a shared way of communicating that can make people feel comfortable with each other.

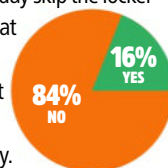
NO

Three reasons we should not use abbreviations

- 1 They can slow down reading or comprehension if people have to stop and figure out what something means.
- 2 Abbreviations can make people feel left out or even embarrassed if they don’t know the meaning.
- 3 Sometimes, abbreviations aren’t polite and could make someone seem uncaring.

LAST WEEK’S POLL

Last week, we asked if schools should get rid of lockers. While many kids today skip the locker and carry what they need to class, most of you want lockers to stay.



What do you think?

Now that you’ve read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote **YES** if you think we should use abbreviations or **NO** if you don’t. We’ll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.



Inspiring young chefs

Mark Bittman is on a mission to make cooking simple and enjoyable.

Cookbook author Mark Bittman has spent years helping people learn to cook. Now he is helping kids gain confidence in the kitchen with *How to Cook Everything: The Kids' Edition*, an adaptation of one of his best-selling cookbooks.

Bittman, age 75, grew up in New York City, surrounded by a variety of cuisines—from Chinese to Italian. He has always loved food, but he did not start cooking until he was in college. Attending Clark University in Massachusetts, he was disappointed with the cafeteria food, so he taught himself to cook.

After college, Bittman turned his love of food into a writing career, starting at a local Connecticut newspaper. He went on to become a *New York Times* food columnist for 25 years and wrote more than 30 books. He is best known for *How to Cook*

Everything (1998), which inspired several adaptations, with versions for vegetarian diets, quick meals, and now, kids.

"The goal is not to have kids cook perfectly but to have kids cook at all,"

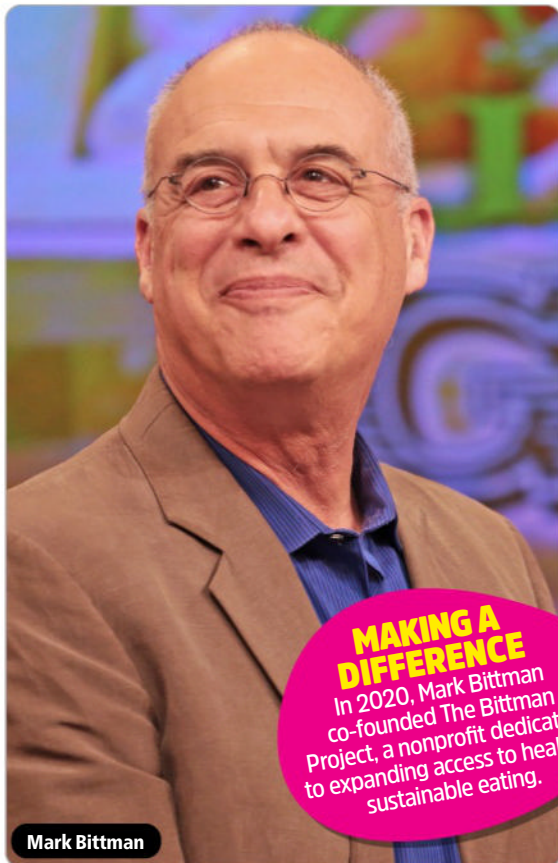
Bittman told *The Week Junior*. He hopes the book brings families together and leads to healthier eating with less reliance on prepared foods. *The Kids' Edition* is designed to help young cooks learn beginner's basics. It is filled with fun, simple recipes like

French toast and chicken noodle soup, plus the author's favorite: egg pizza.

Bittman aims to empower a new generation to cook for themselves, just as he has throughout his career. His best advice for home chefs of all ages is simple: "Cook the stuff you like."



The new book



Mark Bittman

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In 2020, Mark Bittman co-founded The Bittman Project, a nonprofit dedicated to expanding access to healthy, sustainable eating.

Zendaya's new role

Actress Zendaya, age 27, has joined the cast of *Shrek 5*, the latest installment in DreamWorks' beloved animated franchise, set to arrive in theaters in December 2026. Zendaya will voice Felicia, the teen daughter of Shrek and Fiona. Born Zendaya Maree Stoermer Coleman, she got her start on Disney Channel's *Shake It Up* (2010–2013) and has since starred in many blockbuster films, including the *Spider-Man* and *Dune* franchises. A longtime *Shrek* fan, Zendaya once wrote on social media, "I watch *Shrek* too often in my adulthood."



Zendaya



Barrington Scott

An epic aquatic quest

Scuba diving instructor Barrington Scott, age 33, became the fastest person to scuba dive on all seven continents. Guinness World Records recently confirmed his feat of 19 days, 19 hours, and 40 minutes. Scott's journey began in December in Australia. He traveled through Thailand, Egypt, Malta, the US, and Argentina before finishing in Antarctica. Scott, a Black American, hopes to inspire more people of color to explore scuba diving. "By showcasing diversity," he said, "we can inspire individuals from all backgrounds to embrace and enjoy the wonders of the ocean."

OVERHEARD

“”



"You have to wake up and have a purpose."

Rose Giron, believed to be the oldest survivor of the Holocaust (1933–1945), who died last month at age 113



Animals and the environment

TYPICAL TURTLES

Loggerheads are the most common sea turtle species in the US and often nest on Florida beaches.



A loggerhead sea turtle

Handling the heat

Green and loggerhead sea turtles in Cyprus have been adapting to the warming planet by nesting earlier in the year. Baby turtles are less likely to hatch successfully when the temperature is hot, so nesting during cooler months will help more turtles survive.



A nesting turtle

Sea turtles “dance” when they’re excited

Young loggerhead sea turtles do a particular “dance” when they are expecting to find food. Recently, this behavior helped scientists make an important discovery about how these creatures navigate the world.

Loggerhead sea turtles are known to travel thousands of miles during their epic migration journeys. Despite this globe-trotting behavior, they often return to the same locations, such as feeding sites, again and again. Earlier research has shown that the turtles can sense Earth’s magnetic fields and use them as a navigational guide, like using a compass to find which direction is north. Now a new study has found that loggerheads can also

recognize specific areas by learning the magnetic signals associated with them—creating a sort of magnetic map.

Kayla Goforth, a researcher at Texas A&M University, worked with a team of researchers.



A baby loggerhead

They first gathered loggerhead turtle hatchlings and placed them in buckets. These buckets were hooked up to a system of coils that generated magnetic fields inside the containers.

Each turtle spent time in two buckets. In one of the buckets, the turtle received food. In the other bucket, it was not fed. Eventually, whenever the turtles were exposed to the magnetic fields inside the buckets where they received food, they showed their excitement by

“dancing.” Goforth explained, “When they get really excited, they stick their heads out, they slap their flippers wildly, they spin in place sometimes.” The movements of the turtles suggested that they had learned to associate the magnetic field with food.

Exactly how loggerhead turtles can sense magnetic fields is still unknown. “We know that for the visual sense, you have eyes. For the sense of smell, you have a nose. And for hearing, you have ears,” Goforth said. “But no receptor like that has been identified for the magnetic sense.”

Some other animals, including monarch butterflies, also use magnetic signals to guide their migrations, so Goforth plans to continue studying this ability in different species. Understanding how the process works could help humans avoid disrupting the signals that are important to animals.



PLACE OF THE WEEK

Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah

Situated in southern Utah, Bryce Canyon National Park is famous for its hoodoos. Hoodoos are tall, thin, spindly rock formations. In Bryce Canyon, they’re vivid reds and oranges, and some hoodoos are higher than a 10-story building. In the park there are also several natural rock arches, some large enough to drive a car through. Utah prairie dogs, mule deer, mountain lions, and Uintah chipmunks live in the park, along with great basin rattlesnakes and short-horned lizards. At night, thousands of stars shine in some of the clearest, darkest skies in the entire US.



A Utah prairie dog



DID YOU KNOW?

The Ecuadorian hillstar hummingbird produces the highest-pitched sound of any bird ever recorded.

An Ecuadorian hillstar hummingbird



Surprising hummingbird nests

Hummingbirds famously live alone and fight any other individual that enters their territory. So scientists were stumped when they found what appeared to be a colony of these tiny birds sharing a home high up in Ecuador's Andes Mountains.

Researchers spotted some Chimborazo hillstars, a subspecies of Ecuadorian hillstar hummingbirds, nesting together in a cave at the Chimborazo volcano. They counted 23 adult birds and four chicks in the group, which they think is the first documented example of hummingbirds peacefully living

as a community. "It was mind-boggling," said researcher Gustavo Cañas-Valle.

At first, experts guessed that there were not enough nesting sites available for solo sleeping, but a look around the area revealed many places where the birds could have built solitary nests. Instead, they had formed six more shared colonies. The team also saw birds leaving and returning to the cave together, with about 80% flying in the same direction. Experts still aren't sure why these birds live in groups, but it may help them find food and mates more easily.

Animal of the week

Red-necked wallaby



The Denver Zoo has welcomed its first baby to the zoo's new Down Under habitat. The red-necked wallaby joey was spotted peeking out of its mother's pouch and is expected to emerge fully in the coming months.

- **LIFE SPAN:** About 12 to 15 years in captivity
- **HABITAT:** Forests and grasslands in Australia
- **SIZE:** About 3 feet tall
- **DIET:** Grasses, herbs, and roots
- **FUN FACT:** Wallabies can use their tails like an extra leg for balance and support.



Good week / Bad week



Chel snakeheads

Researchers have confirmed the existence of a rare fish that was thought to be extinct. Several brightly colored Chel snakeheads were discovered in India's Chel River—the first sighting of the species in about 85 years.



Marsican brown bears

A study found that Marsican brown bears have developed an impairment inside their cells that reduces their energy levels. About 50 bears from this endangered subspecies remain in central Italy, and experts are trying to help them survive.



"What is the biggest fish in the world?"

Lincoln, 9, Virginia

Sara Lesser

Education supervisor,
Aquarium of the Pacific

The biggest fish in the world is the whale shark. They are about 40 feet long, which is as big as a school bus! These large sharks use comb-like structures in their gills to catch tiny plankton for food. Their spots are special too. They are unique to each whale shark, just like your fingerprints!



A whale shark

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to hello@theweekjunior.com. Find out more about the Aquarium of the Pacific at aquariumofpacific.org.



All about Pez



A classic candy and

Pez candy has been a favorite treat for nearly 100 years.

A brick-shaped candy, sold with a colorful dispenser, began as a breath mint. How did this sweet treat become a popular collectible?

The history of Pez

In 1927, Austrian businessman Eduard Haas III wanted to create a satisfying breath mint candy for adults. After he created small, round peppermint candies to be sold in tins, he needed a catchy name to attract attention to his new product. So he formed the word "Pez" from the first, middle, and last letters of the German word for peppermint, *pfefferminz*, and called his candies "Pez drops." It would be a few years before Pez candy adopted the rectangular shape that is familiar today.



Eduard Haas III

A vintage Pez advertisement



A candy catches on

To spread the word about Pez, Haas hired women to work in Pez uniforms and give out free candy samples around Vienna, the capital city of Austria. The candy's popularity spread quickly through the nation. In the 1930s, Haas changed the shape from the original round drops to tablets that resemble tiny bricks, made by compressing layers of confectioner's sugar. The first Pez candy dispensers were sold in 1949 at the Vienna Trade Fair. These were slim, plastic, handheld contraptions that fit a roll of Pez candies to enjoy one by one. Pez soon became a big hit across Europe. In 1952, Pez established its first US headquarters in New York City.



Pez dispensers, left to right: Wall-E, Shrek, Luigi, Garfield, and Hello Kitty

Pez dispensers through the years

For decades, Pez has been turning pop culture trends into candy dispensers, delighting collectors—who call themselves Pezheads—around the world.

1955
Robot



1957
Witch



1969
Peter Pan



1976
Chick in Egg





All about Pez



colorful collectible

ROLL CALL

In each roll of Pez, there are 12 pieces of candy—the same number since Pez dispensers were introduced in 1949.

WOW!

This year, a man in Caldwell, New Jersey, set a record for the single largest collection of Pez candy dispensers: 6,481.



The SpongeBob SquarePants collection

Character dispensers take off

By 1955, Pez introduced candy in new fruit flavors, like lemon, orange, and strawberry, to appeal to kids. They also introduced dispensers in the shape of a robot and Santa Claus. In 1957, Pez started selling character heads on top of the traditional slim dispensers, beginning with a Halloween witch. The following year, Pez signed a licensing agreement with the brand that created the comic-strip character Popeye the Sailor. Later, Pez added Disney characters, Smurfs, and My Little Pony to its lineup. In 1991, the first Pez collectors convention was held in Mentor, Ohio. Pez released its first-ever limited-edition set, called the Star Wars Collectors Set, in 2005. In 2011, Pez introduced a "Presidents of the United States" series.



Inside the Pez Visitor Center

Pez in the present

In 2011, the Pez Visitor Center opened in Orange, Connecticut (near the Pez manufacturing plant). It houses the most extensive collection of Pez memorabilia on display to the public. The company sells about 5 billion candies and 75 million dispensers in more than 80 countries annually. This year, Pez has introduced new Peeps and Hello Kitty collections and will expand its Minecraft Collection with new dispensers. In 2027, Pez will celebrate its 100th anniversary.

1979

Wonder Woman



1993

Fred Flintstone



2002

R2-D2



2008

Boston Red Sox



2025

Classic Pez presenter





AMAZING EVOLUTION

Over the course of millions of years, birds evolved from a type of dinosaur called a theropod, which includes *Tyrannosaurus rex*.



An artist's rendering of *Baminornis zhenghensis*

Bird fossil rewrites ancient history

The fossil of a prehistoric bird that lived 150 million years ago is likely the oldest bird ever discovered and changes the timeline of bird evolution, a new study found. Called *Baminornis zhenghensis*, it was discovered in 2023 in China.

B. zhenghensis is only the second bird known to have lived during the Jurassic period. The first, called *Archaeopteryx*, was discovered in 1862 in Germany. *Archaeopteryx* was half bird and half reptile and had a long, narrow tail similar to a velociraptor's. In fact, it had so many dinosaur-like features that it helped scientists determine that birds had evolved (changed very slowly over time) from dinosaurs.

For more than 150 years after *Archaeopteryx* was found, however, no other birds from that period were discovered. That left scientists with a gap in knowledge about bird evolution. They knew other flying birds must have existed, but they had no fossil evidence to prove it.

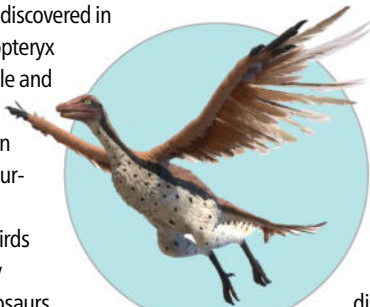
The discovery of *B. zhenghensis* changed that and also shed light on the process of bird evolution. Though *Archaeopteryx* and *B. zhenghensis* are from the same era, they were found about 5,500 miles apart and have key

differences. *Archaeopteryx* was about the size of a modern crow and could only fly in short bursts. *B. zhenghensis* was smaller—about the size of a modern quail. Like modern birds, it had a short tail that helped it fly smoothly. The development of short tails was crucial in helping birds evolve into better flyers. The tail on *B. zhenghensis* indicated that it was further along in the evolutionary process than *Archaeopteryx*.

"The reduction of the tail constitutes the most dramatic change during the dinosaurs–bird transition," said Min Wang, who led the research.

Before *B. zhenghensis* was discovered, scientists had only found birds with short tails that lived about 20 million years later. But *B. zhenghensis* suggested that bird evolution started millions of years earlier than researchers previously realized.

"*Baminornis* tells us that a variety of birds lived during the Jurassic, and they flew in different ways," said Steve Brusatte, a scientist who wrote a commentary that accompanied the study. "There was a [large group] of birds flying overhead of *Allosaurus* and *Stegosaurus* and *Brontosaurus* and the other iconic Jurassic dinosaurs."



An illustration of *Archaeopteryx*

A fierce new predator



Bastetodon syrtos

Scientists in Egypt found the prehistoric remains of a 30-million-year-old predator that had never been seen before: a leopard-size cat with powerful jaws and razor-sharp teeth (above). The discovery was made by researchers from Mansoura University and the American University in Egypt.

The group was working in Faiyum, in a desert that was covered in thick forest in the animal's time. A team member first spotted a large set of teeth sticking out of the ground. When the fossil was dug up, it revealed the nearly complete skull of an apex carnivore (predator that occupied the top of the food chain). Scientists named it *Bastetodon syrtos* after Bastet, the Egyptian goddess of protection, who had the head of a lioness.



Mapping the viruses in the human body

Viruses are known for making people sick, but scientists say the human body contains trillions of viruses that do not cause any illness. To find out more, researchers across the US are joining an effort called the Human Virome Program (HVP). A virome is the collection of all the viruses in one place, like our bodies.

The majority of viruses in our bodies are probably not harmful, and many of them may even be good for us. No one can say for sure, however, because most virus research has been focused on the ones that make people sick. The HVP will focus on the "healthy" viruses, which do not cause disease, and how they may affect our immune systems and overall well-being.

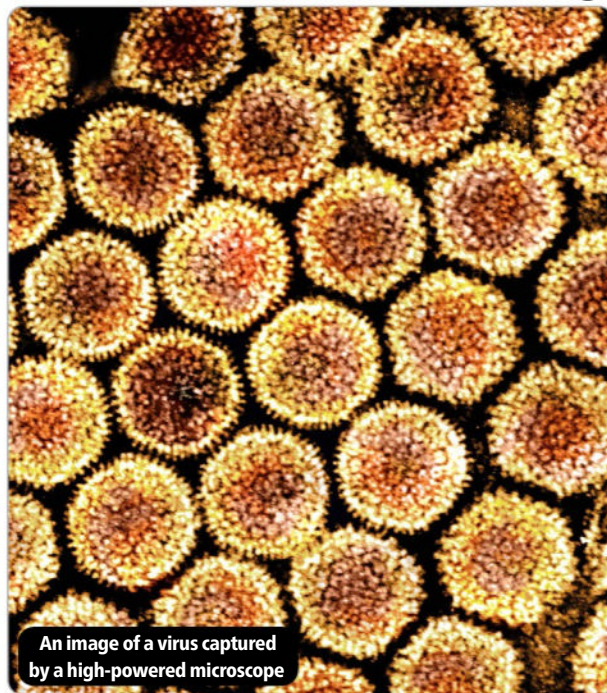
HVP researchers will gather samples including saliva, poop, and

blood from thousands of volunteers. Participants will include people from many different ethnic groups at many ages. The scientists will use a range of tools to analyze the samples, including artificial intelligence (AI, when computers learn like people do).

Next, the researchers will catalog the viruses, creating a "map" of the human virome. This information will help them assess the similarities and differences among viruses and identify links between specific viruses and certain health outcomes.

Scientists said the project could one day help them spot developing viruses, determine which ones are likely to cause or prevent illness, and even develop treatment methods when people do get sick.

WOW!
Scientists say there are more viruses on Earth than there are stars in the universe.



An image of a virus captured by a high-powered microscope



The SATED oven (right) and a cake that was baked in it

Space oven can cook food in orbit

Cooking in space is no easy task. There's no gravity, so ingredients don't stay together, and it's not safe to use high heat. Astronauts currently eat freeze-dried or dehydrated food warmed up with hot water. But a new space oven called SATED (which stands for safe appliance, tidy, efficient, and delicious) could allow them to whip up a real meal.

SATED is about the size of a toaster oven. It has a cylinder with heated walls that spins so fast it

creates its own gravity. Ingredients in the cylinder are pushed up against the hot walls and heated through direct contact. (Regular ovens heat the air to cook food.) SATED's top temperature is 428° F, which means it can't create fire or smoke.

The space oven can fry, boil, simmer, bake, mix, and toast food. So far, it has successfully cooked pizza, quiche, and lemon cake. SATED is still being tested, but the hope is that it will be put into orbit soon.



A device that's like Braille for sports



The OneCourt in use

There's a new way for people with vision impairments to enjoy live sports. The OneCourt device uses haptic feedback to communicate what's happening in real time so people can follow along. Haptic technology uses force, vibration, or movement to create a sense of touch.

OneCourt has a raised map of the field or court, which vibrates as the action unfolds. Different vibration patterns mean different types of activity, like throws, kicks, hits, or runs. OneCourt users follow along with their fingertips, which is similar to how Braille is read.



Photos of the week



Fish out of water

Georgina Steytler shot this picture of a blue-spotted mudskipper in Australia.



Natural beauty

This image of the Milky Way was taken by Jake Mosher in Montana.



Twice as nice

Khaichuin Sim took this photograph of two lanternflies in Malaysia.



DOINA FELEDICHIUK; NGAN SHUN VICTOR-WONG; GEORGINA STEYTLER; JAKE MOSHER; RORY J LEWIS; KHAICHUIN SIM

Photos of the week



Strike a pose

This photo of a Guinea fowl in Tanzania was captured by Ngar Shun Victor Wong.



Ready, set, jump!

A fox in Canada was photographed by Donna Feledichuk.



Bugging out

Rory J. Lewis took this close-up of a damselfly in the UK.



The Orlando Pride on March 23

MAJOR MOVE

Rebeca Bernal, a star from Mexico's Liga MX Femenil, is now playing for the Washington Spirit.

Expansion update



In 2026, the NWSL will add a new club in Denver, Colorado. The team's owners recently revealed their plans to build a soccer stadium in the city's downtown area. It will be the second stadium built solely for women's soccer and is expected to have 14,500 seats.

New NWSL season gets underway

This year's NWSL (National Women's Soccer League) regular season kicked off on March 14. It will run until early November, and the league's 14 teams will each compete in 26 matches during that time. The eight teams with the most points (earned through wins and ties) will get a spot in the playoffs. The Orlando Pride are the reigning champions.

One of the big changes this season is that several top players are no longer competing in the league. Veterans who retired at the end of last season include Alex Morgan and Kelly O'Hara, who played key roles in shaping the NWSL's success. Additionally, standout defender Naomi Girma left the league to play for

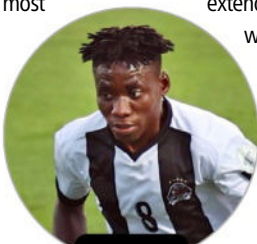
Chelsea FC, a top team in England. Chelsea paid \$1.1 million for her, which was the most expensive transfer in women's soccer history.

On the NWSL's opening day, the Pride extended last year's dominance with a 6–0 win over the Chicago Stars FC. Pride forward Barbra Banda scored twice in the match. On March 23, the team earned their second win by beating Gotham FC, 2–0.

Another team off to a hot start is the Kansas City Current. They defeated the Portland Thorns, 3–1, in their opening match and had a 2–0 win over the Washington Spirit, the runner-up in last season's championship, on March 22. The match featured a historic moment when Current

forward Flora Marta Lacho entered the game in the 81st minute. She became the first athlete from Angola to play in the NWSL. Meanwhile, forward Temwa Chawinga set a new franchise record when she scored in the 99th minute, the latest goal ever made by a Current player. At the end of Week 2, the Current and the Pride were the only two teams that were still undefeated.

In addition to league play this year, two NWSL teams—Gotham and the Thorns—are competing in the Concacaf W Champions Cup, a competition featuring clubs from North America, Central America, and the Caribbean. Both US teams have advanced to the semifinals, and in May they will face off against top Mexican clubs. The winner of the final will earn the title of North America's top women's club team.



Flora Marta Lacho

THIS WEEK'S WINNERS...

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

The March Madness tournament continues, and in men's action on March 22, 10th-seeded (ranked) Arkansas upset St. John's, a number two seed, 75–66, to advance to the Sweet 16 round. Arkansas is the lowest-seeded men's team to make it that far this year. On the women's side the same day, second-seeded TCU made its first-ever Sweet 16 with an 85–70 win over seventh-seeded Louisville.



Lindsey Vonn

ALPINE SKIING

Lindsey Vonn of the US, who ended a five-year retirement to race this season, took second in the super-G at the World Cup Finals on March 23. It was the first top-three finish of her comeback.

COLLEGE WRESTLING

Oklahoma State's Wyatt Hendrickson won the NCAA heavyweight title on March 22. He upset Gable Steveson of the University of Minnesota, a two-time champ and Olympic gold medalist who had been on a 70-match winning streak.



WOW!

US track star Grant Holloway has recorded the four fastest times ever in the 60-meter hurdles.



Grant Holloway of the US in the men's 60-meter hurdles

US shines at big track and field event

From March 21 to March 23, top track and field athletes, including several Olympic champions, competed at the 2025 World Athletics Indoor Championships in Nanjing, China. US athletes left with a total of 16 medals, the most of any country.

On Day 1, American women won bronzes in the pentathlon and shot put. Day 2 featured one of the most anticipated races, the men's 60-meter hurdles. One competitor was US star Grant Holloway, who won gold in the 110-meter hurdles at the Paris Olympics last summer. He had not lost a 60-meter race in more than 10 years and was vying to become the first person to win three straight World Indoor titles in the event. He did it, crossing the finish line in 7.42 seconds and beating silver medalist Wilhem Belocian of France by .12 seconds, a large margin of victory in that event.

The same day, the US swept the podium in the men's 400 meters. Christopher Bailey won gold, Brian Faust took silver, and Jacory Patterson earned bronze. US athletes also won silvers in the women's 3,000-meter race and the women's 400-meter race, plus a bronze in men's pole vault.

On Day 3, the US swept the men's and women's 4x4-meter relay events. The women's team—made up of Quanera Hayes, Bailey Lear, Rosey Effiong, and Alexis Holmes—crossed the finish line more than four seconds ahead of the Polish team, which won silver. Other US gold medalists that day included Josh Hoey in the men's 800 meters and Claire Bryant in the women's long jump. Americans also won the silver and bronze in men's shot put, as well as a bronze in the men's 1,500-meter race.



COACH OF THE WEEK

Instructor's Name: **Katarina Wester**

Activity: **Ballet**

"I am so lucky to be dancing at San Francisco Ballet and to have Ms. Wester as my teacher. She always inspires me to do my best and discover my purpose as a dancer. She is so caring and understanding, and she will come in early to give us a fun warm-up. This year, while she's been my teacher, I've grown the most. I always look forward to class with her. She is the most incredible ballet teacher I've ever had, and I appreciate her tremendously." Stella, 13, California



To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to hello@theweekjunior.com. Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

SPOTLIGHT ON...



Alexa Brabec

AGE: 20 SPORT: NORDIC COMBINED SKIING
TEAM: USA

Early years I started skiing when I was 2. I grew up in a big ski town in Colorado, so my parents put me on skis as soon as I could walk. Quickly after that, I joined the local winter sports club. I really like that skiing is an adrenaline sport. It's fast and free, and there are a lot of different things you can do with it and ways to push your limits.

Good example My biggest role model was Jessie Diggins, an American cross-country skier. She has a lot of grit and is super passionate about skiing and giving it everything you've got. She has a bit of an underdog story, too, which I think is really inspirational.

Getting fit In Nordic combined, you compete in cross-country skiing and ski jumping. To train, I ski six days a week for an hour or two, and I typically jump three days a week in three- to four-hour sessions. I'm in the gym, too.

Simple strategy When I have a big competition, I try to focus on things that I can control and think about the little technical things I've been working on in training. If I have a disappointing day, I think about what went wrong and how I'm going to change that going forward. Talking with my family and friends usually helps too.

Making history Last year, I earned the first-ever women's Nordic combined medal for the US at Junior World Championships. I got two silvers in all.

Words of wisdom Choose a sport because you love doing it, not just because you want to be competitive and win.





REAL WORLDS

Minecraft lands are coming to theme parks in the US and UK and will open between 2026 and 2027.



A Minecraft Movie

Minecraft becomes a movie

The well-known video game has inspired a comedy adventure set in the famous block-filled universe.

One of the most popular virtual worlds is coming to the big screen. *A Minecraft Movie* is a funny action-adventure based on the Minecraft video game and mixes live-action and computer-generated imagery (CGI). It arrives in theaters on April 4.

The Minecraft game was released in 2011, and more than 300 million copies have been sold since then. In it, players use 3D blocks to create their own lands. "Minecraft is such an amazing world with totally

original creatures and characters," the film's director, Jared Hess, told *The Week Junior*. "It's the perfect place to go on an epic adventure."

In the movie, four humans (including one played by *Aquaman* star Jason Momoa) travel to the Overworld, the game's primary dimension, and use their creative skills to battle Piglins, Creepers, Skeletons, and Zombies. The newcomers are guided by Steve, a human character and an expert crafter in the land. He is based on a default player skin in the game. Steve is portrayed by Jack Black

(Po in the *Kung Fu Panda* films), who said he played Minecraft for almost two months to prepare for the role. Most of the Overworld sets were built with life-size Minecraft blocks. "It was surreal walking onto set every day being surrounded by actual blocky trees, villager houses, and mines," Hess said.

Mojang, the company behind the game, was involved in the making of the film. Fans will notice some new elements, but Hess said a goal was to keep the movie "as close to the game as possible." He said he hopes that after audiences see it, they will "feel inspired to embrace teamwork, courage, and creativity just like our heroes in the movie."



A bee in the film

3 more films set in games

Wreck-It Ralph

In this 2012 comedy-adventure, a video game villain is tired of his job. He decides to leave his game to visit new worlds and prove he's not a bad guy. A sequel was released in 2018.



Space Jam: A New Legacy

Basketball legend LeBron James stars in this 2021 film that mixes live action and animation. After an evil character pulls James' son into a digital realm, he and a Looney Tunes team have to win him back in a game against digitized pros.



Free Guy

Guy is a bank teller who loves his life, so he is surprised to learn he is a character in a video game. When his digital world is under threat, he takes on a hero role. The funny 2021 action-adventure is rated PG-13.





GREAT HONOR

The Kennedy Center was named for President John F. Kennedy, the 35th US President, and opened in 1971.



The Moonwalkers: A Journey with Tom Hanks

Festival mixes space and the arts

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, is currently hosting a festival called Earth to Space: Arts Breaking the Sky. With a mix of films, performances, art exhibitions, and scientist speakers, it runs through April 20.

One of the big events will be a special edition of Starmus, a global festival of science communication and art that is making its first stop in the US. It will take place on April 1 and April 2 and will have speakers that include NASA astronaut Nicole Stott, the first person to paint with watercolors in space, and Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield, who filmed a music video of himself singing the classic song "Space Oddity" on the International Space Station.

Another highlight is a new documentary by Aneeshwar Kunchala, the Kennedy Center Youth Ambassador for the Arts & Environment. The film

follows him on a visit to NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland. There is also a new film about the Apollo missions, *The Moonwalkers: A Journey with Tom Hanks*. It is shown in a large room and projected on the walls and floor.

Kids who enjoy crafts can participate in a workshop in which a group will make a spacesuit with a spacewear and textiles artist. People looking for photo ops on-site can pose with a lunar rover or check out 30-foot-high models of the Earth, the Moon, and Mars that are lit from within.

The festival was co-curated (put together) by Alicia Adams, who told *The Week Junior* it is meant to entertain visitors and spark their curiosity. "It is our belief that insights into the marvels of the universe can inspire and that the arts can stimulate fresh thinking about the challenges that confront us," she said.



Aneeshwar Kunchala



READER RECOMMENDS



Finding 'Ohana PG (Netflix)

"This movie is about a girl named Pili, who spends her summer in Hawaii with her family. At her grandfather's house, she finds an old journal that belonged to a sailor who helped hide treasure on the island. After realizing her grandfather cannot pay off his house bills, Pili goes on an adventure with her friends and brother to find the treasure and use it to pay the bills. The group goes into a cave and has to jump over lava pits, survive spider bites, and even walk through tombs. I loved the movie's Hawaiian music and beautiful scenery. It made me feel like I was in Hawaii as well." Laila, 11, New Jersey

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to hello@theweekjunior.com.



THIS WEEK'S WATCH LIST



Kids Baking Championship (Max)

Season 13 of this competition series recently ended, so now all the episodes are streaming. This time, talented young bakers were challenged to create animal-themed sweets that included edible terrariums with insects, zoo cakes, and sea creature desserts.



Wolf King (Netflix)

Curtis Jobling's Wereworld book series inspired this new animated fantasy adventure. It is set in a world where nobles shape-shift into animal-human hybrids. Lionlords rule, but Drew, the last of the Werewolves, is the true heir to the throne and sets out to unite the fractured kingdom.



The Only Girl in the Orchestra (Netflix)

Double bassist Orin O'Brien made history in 1966 as the first female musician in the New York Philharmonic. Her niece, filmmaker Molly O'Brien, made this film about her life and career, and it won this year's Oscar (top film award) for Best Documentary Short.



On screen



Cuisineer

A game of cooking and adventure

Cuisineer is a new dungeon-crawling cooking game. It is available for the Nintendo Switch, PlayStation platforms, Xbox, and PC.

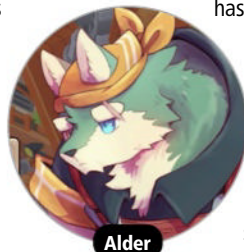
The game stars an adventurous young woman named Pom, who returns to her home village of Paell to discover that her parents have gone missing and the family restaurant has been abandoned. The restaurant is also in debt, so Pom has to fix it up and get it running again.

Pom knows how to cook, but she has to gather her ingredients in treacherous dungeons. As in *Minecraft*, the dungeons are split into biomes (environments) that include forest ruins, lava-filled caverns, frozen ice fjords, and swamps. You'll be able to find different kinds of items in each one, which encourages you to explore. However, there are challenges along

the way. To get the best meats and vegetables, Pom will have to battle a giant chicken and a giant hen, fire-breathing peppers, and other food-style foes.

In the fights, Pom uses kitchen-themed weapons, such as a spatula or a swordfish. She can throw plates and egg-timer bombs, too. The game also has special power boosts, such as *Toasty*, which creates a flame, and *Frosty*, which freezes things.

Once you have ingredients, it's time to whip up some dishes. After working with locals, like a wolf carpenter named Alder, to revive the restaurant and customize the kitchen, Pom can make recipes from around the world. There are more than 100, ranging from a baked potato to the *Carnivore's Carnival*, a meat stir-fry. Guiding her may inspire some real-life, post-game cooking.



Alder



PODCAST OF THE WEEK

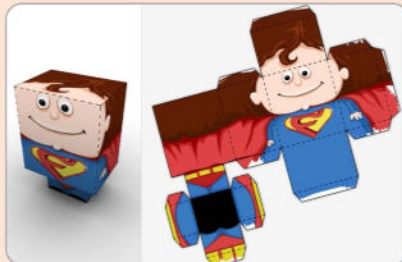
THE ALIEN ADVENTURES OF FINN CASPIAN

Major podcast platforms

Eight-year-old Finn Caspian is the captain of the Famous Marlowe 280 Interplanetary Exploratory Space Station. In 12 seasons of 15- to 20-minute episodes, he and his friends discover planets, help aliens, and solve mysteries.



APP OF THE WEEK



FOLDIFY

Apple App Store

If you're interested in making 3D paper art, this app is fun to try. Using an iPhone or iPad, you choose an image, such as a zoo animal, superhero, or car, color it in with your finger on your device, then print it out. The paper will have lines that show you where to fold, cut, and glue to make your object.

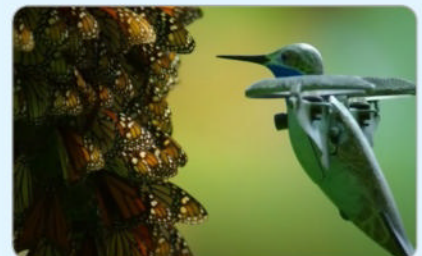


VIDEO OF THE WEEK

WATCH A BREATHTAKING MONARCH BUTTERFLY SWARM

tinyurl.com/TWJUS-Butterflies

At first, you'll see butterflies resting on tree branches in the mountains of Mexico. Little by little, they begin to fly until there are thousands of them in the air. Much of the up-close footage was filmed by a tiny drone.



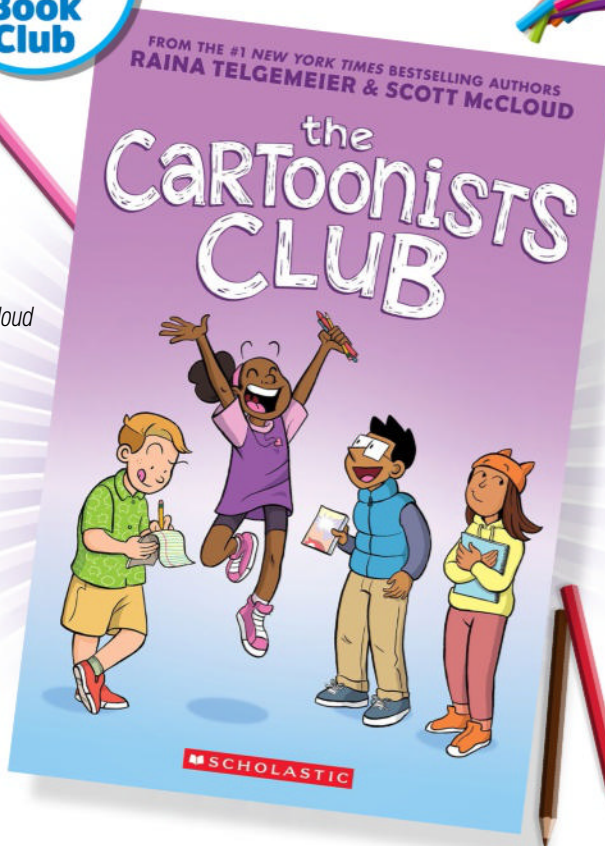


OUR BOOK CLUB
PICK FOR APRIL

The Cartoonists Club

By Raina Telgemeier and Scott McCloud
(Graphix)

Makayla daydreams about writing comics all the time. She's zoning out in math class when another student, Howard, hands her a note with a sketch of their teacher. Makayla bursts out laughing, and the teacher asks them to stay after class. Howard apologizes for getting them in trouble. He tells Makayla that he loves to draw but finds writing stories difficult. Makayla shows Howard her notebook filled with ideas. They decide to try teaming up to create a comic. At first, their words and pictures don't go together. Then they ask their school media specialist if they can start a cartoonists club in the library, and two classmates, Art and Lynda, join. As they begin creating their own minicomics, they apply for an opportunity that will allow more people to see their hard work. Will it happen? Besides a charming friendship story, this graphic novel contains drawing tips, storytelling ideas, and other skills that can help you become a cartoonist yourself.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR YOUR BOOK CLUB

The engaging dialogue and detailed comic panels of *The Cartoonists Club* will grab you from the first page. You can also learn how to create your own comics. Here are questions to get a conversation going with others who have also read the book.

Why do you think the club members work together so well?

How does Makayla help Lynda feel included?

Which minicomic was your favorite? Why?

Is there a part of the process of making comics that surprised you?

Some popular graphic novels are included in the comic panels. Did you recognize any favorites?

If you were to write a comic, what would the title be?

How does a reader's imagination play a role in enjoying a comic?



JOIN THE WEEK JUNIOR'S BOOK CLUB

Watch videos that Raina Telgemeier and Scott McCloud created for *The Week Junior* and learn about our monthly book club at kids.theweekjunior.com/bookclub.



Ask the authors



Comics creators Raina Telgemeier and Scott McCloud co-authored *The Cartoonists Club*. Raina is known for her graphic-novel memoirs, such as *Smile* and *Sisters*. Scott is the author of *Understanding Comics*.

When did the two of you decide to work together?

Raina: I brought up the idea with Scott in 2019, when we were both attending Comic-Con in San Diego.

Scott: I was on board right away! We're both interested in how our brains turn pictures into stories.

How did you collaborate on the book?

Raina: We wrote every draft together. We went back and forth, sometimes daily, rewriting the story and redrawing each other's panels.

How did the story evolve?

Scott: We made three versions. In the first one, we were characters in the story leading a class for kids.

Which character is most like you?

Raina: Lynda avoids revealing what's inside her sketchbook because she doesn't think it's good enough. She becomes bolder after joining the club. That's a lot like how my journey has gone.

Scott: Like Art, I loved to experiment.

What was your favorite book in middle school?

Raina: I loved books by Judy Blume and Beverly Cleary.

Scott: I'd say *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, by E.L. Konigsburg.

Jelly beans or Peeps?

Raina: Peeps are cuter, but jelly beans have better flavors.



WIN A BOOK!

We're giving away one signed copy of *The Cartoonists Club*.

For a chance to win, send your name and address to contests@theweekjunior.com with Cartoon in the subject line. Enter by midnight on April 18. See theweekjunior.com/terms for complete rules.



How to...



BOOKS TO BORROW

America's first lending library, the Library Company of Philadelphia, was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1731 and still exists.

Do more with your library

Discover all the ways you can use this amazing community resource.

Libraries are incredible! You can stay all day while you soak up knowledge and escape into other worlds. Whether you visit regularly or you're new to using libraries, you might be surprised to learn how much they can do for you—beyond letting you borrow amazing books for free. All you need is a library card, which is available to you—at no cost—at the library. Here are some of the many things the library has to offer.

Research and recommendations

Librarians can help you research a school project or paper, show you how to do an internet search, and guide you to reliable sources of accurate information. They can also help you find a book you're looking for, even if you can't remember the exact title. Librarians can also make great book suggestions. Tell them what books you have enjoyed, as well as subjects that interest and inspire you. They can recommend your next read.

Fun clubs and classes

Many libraries host free events for young people. You can ask a librarian or check the library's website for a calendar of upcoming activities and sign up with your

card. These can include tween and teen book clubs, gaming clubs, art workshops, makerspaces, and classes like chess, crafting, and coding.

A multimedia hub

Besides books, you or an adult in your family can also borrow and stream movies, music, and TV shows with the help of library apps like Hoopla and Kanopy—find out which app your library uses. There are also computers to use for free and quiet zones where you can do homework without distractions. You may also find free or discounted printing, photocopying, and scanning services.

Volunteer opportunities

Many libraries welcome volunteer help from kids. You can learn valuable skills, such as managing responsibility and communicating with others. Ask the library if you can be a "book buddy" to a younger child, read during storytime, or assist at crafting activities. Some libraries ask kids to write book reviews to help other kids decide what to read. Others need kids to volunteer to read advance reader copies (ARCs) of books that haven't been published yet and advise the library on whether they should purchase the book.



Find books you'll love to read.

Creative collections



You can get more than books from the library. Check your library for items like these.

Science instruments Some libraries loan out binoculars, telescopes, digital microscopes, and themed science kits.

Tickets Free or discounted passes to museums, aquariums, sports games, and other events may be available.

Technology Many libraries lend laptops, tablets, and GoPro cameras to take home. They may also offer access to 3D printers and Cricut machines.

Outdoor gear You may also be able to borrow hiking boots, backpacks, and tents.



DID YOU KNOW?

Dal and rice, often referred to as "dal chawal," is a common meal in India.



WARNING!

Always ask an adult's permission before using a knife or the stove.

Stir up a delicious dish of spiced dal

Ingredients

- 1 pound bag split red lentils
- 2 tablespoons neutral oil, such as grapeseed or vegetable oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, grated
- 1 teaspoon cumin seed
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- ½ teaspoon turmeric
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 cup unsweetened coconut milk
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Parsley or cilantro, for garnish

Instructions

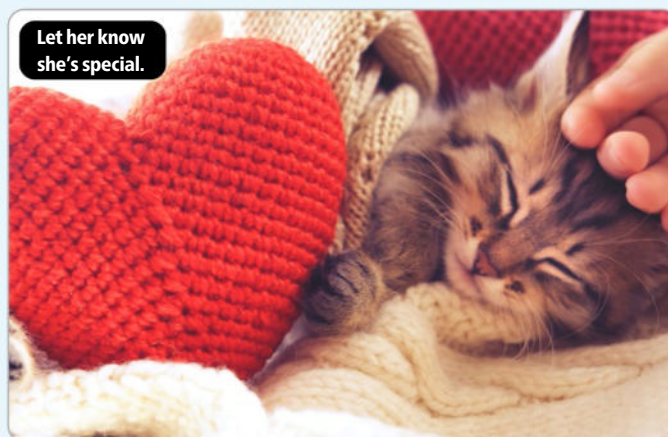
1. Place the lentils in a medium saucepan and cover with cold water. Soak 20 minutes, then drain and rinse the lentils.
2. Return lentils to the pan and add enough water to cover them by ½ inch. Bring lentils to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until they are very soft, about 8 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a skillet over medium-high. Add the onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until they start to soften and color, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, cumin seed, ginger, and turmeric and cook, stirring constantly, for about 2 minutes.
4. Mix in the tomato paste until it evenly coats the onion, then stir in the coconut milk, salt, and pepper.
5. Transfer the cooked lentils to the onion and spice mixture and stir well. Add the lemon juice, then season with more salt and pepper to taste, as needed. Top with fresh parsley or cilantro to serve. Makes 8 servings.



LIFE HACK

SHOW YOUR PETS EXTRA LOVE

National Pet Day is April 11. You may already give a pet love and affection, but this holiday serves as a reminder to show your friend a little extra appreciation. If your pet enjoys social interaction, you can plan to spend more quality time together. You might take your dog for a longer walk in a favorite park or give extra belly rubs. You could also talk to your family about treating your pet to a small gift. Maybe your cat would like a feather wand to play with or your hermit crab would like a coconut shell. Of course, the best way to show your pet love is to provide consistent care—which includes fresh food and water, playtime, and a clean living space—year-round.



Let her know she's special.



Puzzles

Word ladder

To change the word LONG into the word LIST, use each clue to fill in a word that is only one letter different from the word before it. If you get stuck, try solving from the bottom up.



It fills with air when you breathe (and so does your other one)

Ladder step

Item that your fourth finger is named for

Section of a hospital or mansion

Action that involves quickly closing and opening an eye

Color closely associated with Barbie dolls

Half a quart

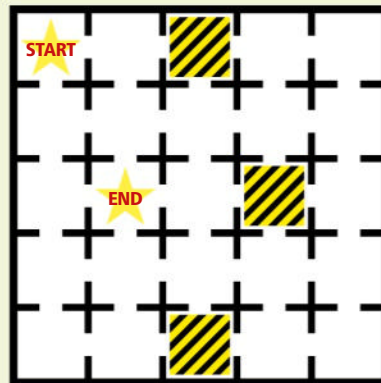
Fuzzy dryer stuff

L O N G

L I S T

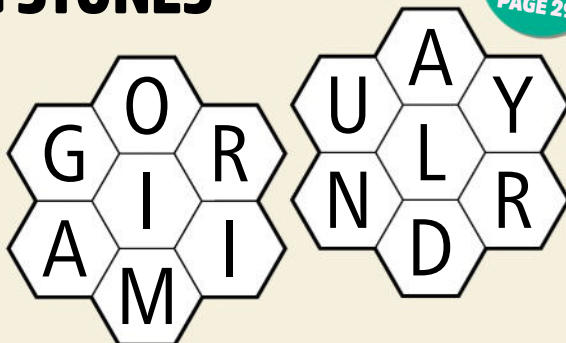
DO NOT ENTER

Draw one continuous path from START to END that goes through every box except the ones containing obstacles. Your path may not cross itself, and there is only one solution.



STEPPING STONES

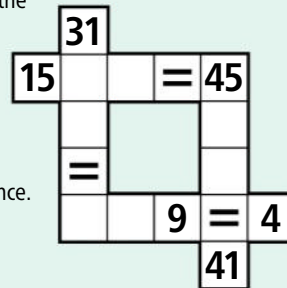
Each figure hides the name of a seven-letter thing you fold. To find each one, start anywhere and move in an unbroken path through letters that share a border (no jumping!), using each letter once. (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)



ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

Crossmath

Fill each empty box with a number or a mathematical symbol (+, −, ×, or ÷) to complete the equations across and down. A symbol can be used more than once.



Spot the difference

These two pictures of Bryce Canyon National Park appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?





A trek through the ages

Dino fossil hides in plain sight

Dinosaurs have been lurking at Biloela State High School in Australia. About 20 years ago, a boulder from a nearby mine was donated for the school's entryway. Students and staff passed by the rock every day until scientist Anthony Romilio examined it and found 66 fossilized footprints from 47 dinosaurs—the most ever seen in a single slab in the country. "My jaw dropped," he said. Experts think the prints are from small, plant-eating dinos with two legs. Mayor Nev Ferrier said the area is "full of surprises."



Here, everyone's a wiener.

A wonderful wiener dog walk

More than 800 dogs and their owners strolled through the streets of Regensburg, Germany, in the world's largest dachshund dog walk. At the Dackelparade, people wore traditional south German clothing and waved banners celebrating the breed, which originated in the country. There was even a giant parade float of a "sausage dog" wearing leather pants called lederhosen. A marching band played as the crowd crossed a historic bridge and celebrated in the town square with partygoers from around the world.



"Don't paint me 'cause I'm beautiful!"

Mysterious orange owl spotted

Birdwatchers in Michigan are hooting with excitement over an extremely unusual bird. The spectacular snowy owl, which fans have nicknamed Rusty or Creamsicle, has reddish-orange feathers along its head and back. Snowy owls are usually white, and experts aren't sure how Rusty gained such a bright color. Some think the owl was accidentally sprayed with a reddish substance, while others say its feathers naturally grew that way. Either way, a wildlife official said Rusty seems to be "healthy and well."



Two-bed, one-bath, zero-g?

Defy gravity in an Astro Pad

Aspiring astronauts can now check in to one of several new "Astro Pads" where they can experience the feeling of zero gravity while surrounded by all the usual home comforts. The UK attractions were designed by retired NASA engineers. During a two-hour session, budding space cadets can float and flip around as the building moves in patterns that create a sense of weightlessness within its walls. The furniture has been securely fitted in place for safety reasons. Is this story real, or are we spinning a false tale?*

*Faked! The real tourist attraction is called The Upside Down House. Although it does not move or create a zero-gravity effect, the entire house—inside and out—has been built upside down for visitors to explore.



Your turn

Editor's note



I have very fond memories of visits to my local library when I was growing up. It was a small building in the center of my town, run by a kind librarian named Mrs. Roberts. I spent hours there, searching through the shelves for books that captured my interest, and always went home with a towering stack I could barely carry. I didn't realize it at the time, but the wonder I experienced in that magical place was one reason I became an avid reader and, eventually, an editor. I bet you have a fantastic library near you as well. And in this week's issue, we highlight the many ways you can use that amazing resource (p24). Libraries often lend more than books, for example. You might be able to check out movies, music, telescopes, computers, and outdoor gear. Or you could join a club, take a class, or volunteer to help younger kids. However you use your library, I hope you feel as happy there as I once did in mine.

Andrea Barbalich
Editorial Director

Reporting stories for a newspaper

“When I participated in *The Week Junior's* Junior Council program in 2021, I wrote my first article about composting. Since then, I have revived my high school newspaper and become an intern at the *The Manchester Journal*, where I've published more than 10 articles. I am either assigned a topic by my editor or allowed to write about what I choose. I report about anything from artificial intelligence transforming how we communicate to in-depth political stories. I love having the ability to go outside the classroom and explore because everyone has their own story and perspective to share.”



Jackson, 18, Vermont

Have you done something interesting or raised money for a cause you care about? Whatever you're up to, we want to hear about it at hello@theweekjunior.com.

JOKE OF THE WEEK
When is the best time for bouncing on a trampoline?
Springtime

CHARITY OF THE WEEK



Ample Harvest

This organization aims to end hunger while also fighting climate change. Ample Harvest picks up unused fruit and vegetables from community gardeners and delivers them to local food pantries. By bringing the extra produce to pantries, less uneaten food ends up in landfills, which helps the environment. Ample Harvest has served 8,300 food pantries. Find out more at ampleharvest.org.



Your hopes for the nation

Niya, an 8-year-old from Virginia, loves that America is a free country where people can do anything they want, as long as it is not against the law. Niya hopes this does not change and that there is peace in the country. As a reader of *The Week Junior*, you may be forming opinions about your hopes and dreams for America. If so, we want to hear them! Go to kids.theweekjunior.com/activities to download a form like the one shown at right. Fill it out, then have an adult email it to us at hello@theweekjunior.com. We'll feature some of the submissions we receive on this page in future issues.

First name Niya Age 8 State Virginia

What do you love most about America and why?
I love that it is a free country and we can do anything we want as long as it is not against the law.

If you could describe America in three words, which words would you choose?
free beautiful loving

What are some of the hopes you have for our country in 2025 and in the future?
That we can stay how we are and let it be peaceful.

Draw a picture of what America looks like to you.

THE WEEK
Junior

IT'S YOUR TURN

Email your news, views, and photos to hello@theweekjunior.com.

Your turn



YOUR PHOTOS

We'd love to see pictures you've taken or pictures with you in them! Have an adult email them to us at hello@theweekjunior.com, along with anything you would like us to know about what's happening in the photo.



"We made the everything bagel pasta. It was so good we all cleaned our plates!" **Charlotte, 10, Michigan**

"I like *The Week Junior* so much that I framed one of the issues!"
Eli, 10, California



"I am an ice skater, and when I read about the figure skaters who died in a plane crash, I donated to the victims' families." **Annie, 10, North Carolina**



Teacher OF THE WEEK

Teacher's Name: **Mrs. Hinrichs**

School: **Reeder Elementary**

"I think Mrs. Hinrichs is the best teacher. I am usually nervous on the first day of school, but when I came into the class, she made me feel comfortable by being very friendly, kind, and open. When we are learning math or spelling, she always makes it fun by playing games to test our knowledge. Mrs. Hinrichs always greets us with a warm smile. She is also patient and caring."

Kaia, 10, Nebraska

Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week!
Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to hello@theweekjunior.com.

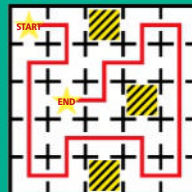
Puzzle answers (from page 26)

Word ladder

LONG
LUNG
RUNG
RING
WING
WINK
PINK
PINT
LINT
LIST

Stepping stones

origami, laundry



$$\begin{array}{r} 31 \\ 15 + 30 = 45 \\ 5 \quad \square \quad - \\ = \quad \square \quad 4 \\ 36 \div 9 = 4 \\ 41 \end{array}$$



Quiz answers (from page 30) **1** b) Peppermint **2** False. He loves drawing but finds writing stories hard. **3** c) Loggerhead **4** SATED **5** a) Germany **6** b) Shrek **7** Whale shark **8** c) Washington, DC **9** False. They found the birds living in shared colonies. **10** Eight **11** a) Jack Black **12** a) Chelsea **13** Toasty **14** True **15** French bulldog

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.



Quiz

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 What was the first Pez flavor?

- a) Lemon b) Peppermint
c) Strawberry

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

2 True or false? In the book *The Cartoonists Club*, Howard loves writing stories but finds drawing hard.

True ☐ False ☐

3 Which species of sea turtle was seen "dancing" when food was expected?

- a) Green b) Hawksbill c) Loggerhead

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

4 What is the name of the special oven scientists have developed for cooking food in space?

5 A city in which country hosted the world's largest dachshund dog walk?

- a) Germany b) Guatemala c) Greece

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

6 Zendaya is joining the cast of which animated film franchise?

- A) *Despicable Me* b) *Shrek* c) *Toy Story*

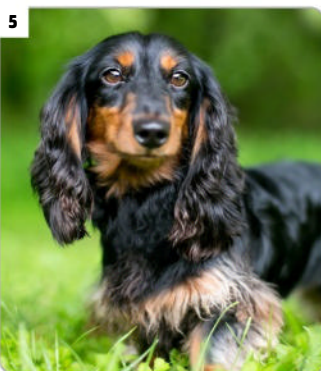
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

7 What is the name of the largest fish species in the world?

8 The festival Earth to Space: Arts Breaking the Sky is being held in which US city?

- a) Cape Canaveral, Florida
b) Houston, Texas
c) Washington, DC

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐



9 True or false? Scientists were surprised to find Chimborazo hillstar hummingbirds living alone in nests.

True ☐ False ☐

10 How many years in a row has the World Happiness Report named Finland the happiest country in the world?

11 Which actor plays the expert crafter who guides the newcomers to the Overworld in *A Minecraft Movie*?

- a) Jack Black
b) Jason Momoa
c) Ryan Reynolds

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

12 The former NWSL defender Naomi Girman now plays for which top soccer club in England?

- a) Chelsea b) Liverpool
c) Manchester United

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

13 In the video game *Cuisineer*, what is the name of the special power boost that creates a flame?

14 True or false? Arkansas was the lowest-seeded team to make the men's NCAA Sweet 16.

True ☐ False ☐

15 According to the American Kennel Club, what was the most popular dog breed in the US in 2024?

THE WEEK Junior

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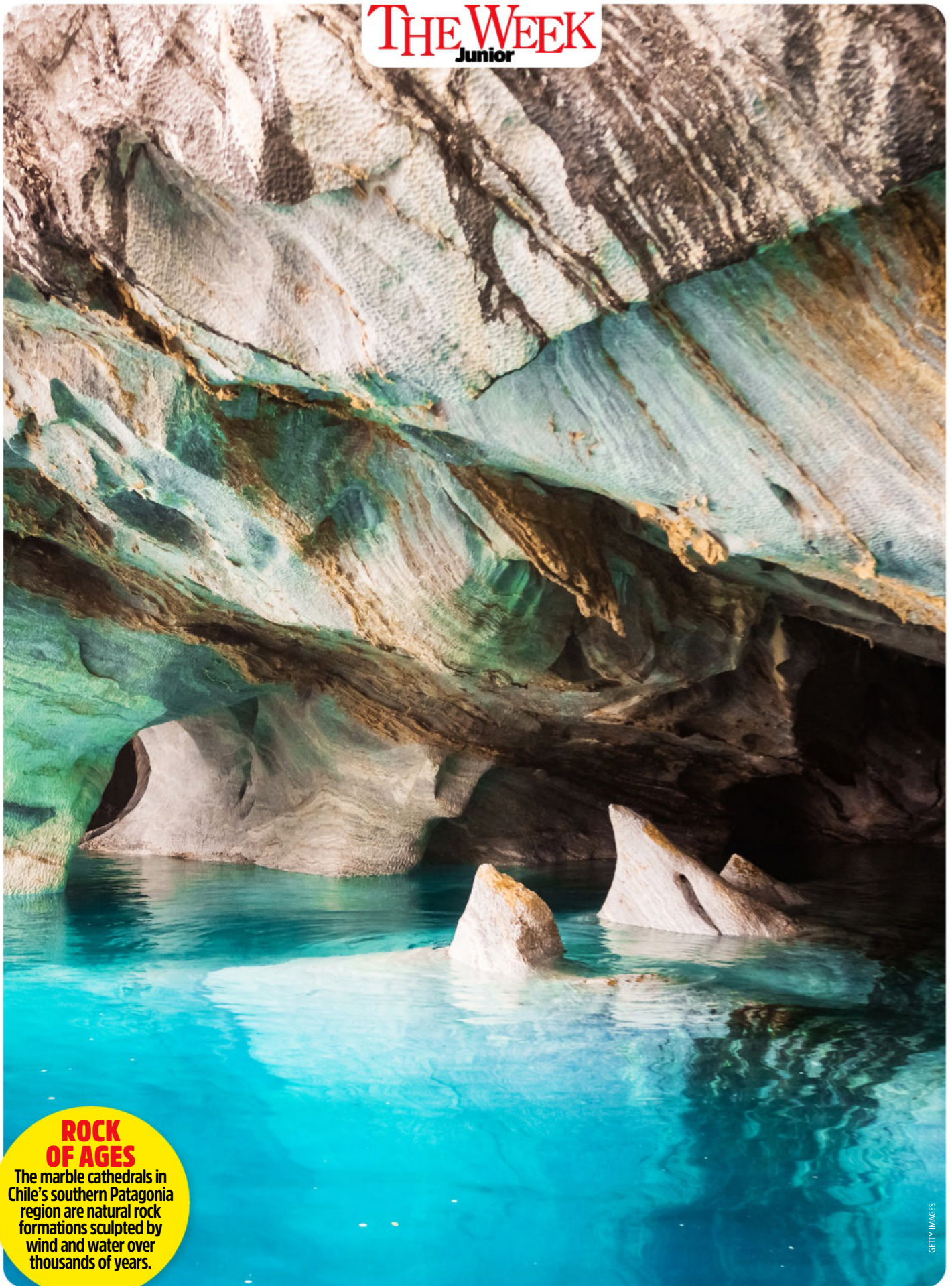
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ROCK OF AGES

The marble cathedrals in Chile's southern Patagonia region are natural rock formations sculpted by wind and water over thousands of years.